

A

REVIEW

OF THE

STATE

OF THE

BRITISH NATION

Saturday, March 11. 1710.

IF it be thought, that in my last I reprinted the Paragraphs quoted out of the *Review* by Dr. *Sacheverell*, in order to write a Viudication of them, it is a Mistake; I really see nothing in them capable of a Charge, or that requires a Vindication; and therefore I only quote them as the *Doctor* has done, and let the World judge, whether they make for him or against him — But I desire a Word or two explaining the Nature of the Thing, and State of the Church in this Age, according to which I would be understood in all I say on this Head.

No Man can charge me with one Word, or can quote out of the *Review*, or any other of my Writing, any Sentence re-

proaching or reflecting on the Church of *England*, as a Church — I challenge them to shew me one Word in all the Volumes of this Work, or in any thing I have written — However I may dissent from the Church in Matters of Discipline, Government, or Worship: — The *Dissenters* acknowledge, and for my self I profess to own the Doctrinal Articles of the Church of *England* to be sound Orthodox and Apostolick; and it has been no Part of this Work, nor ever was *my Way*, to heap Reproach upon what I so clearly recognize.

Nor is it any Matter of Charge upon the Church of *England*, That her Ministers are BUT MEN — Men of like Passions and Infirmities with other Men; For the *Trea-*
sure

sure of the Gospel was given us at first in Earthen Vessels, that the Excellency of the Glory might be of God, &c.

If the Ministers of the Church of England fall into scandalous Crimes; if the dissolute Lives of the Clergy are Matter of Offence, and a Stumbling-Block to others; this is still in it self no Reproach upon the Church; and therefore in all I have said, the Scandal does not reach to the Church, and consequently the Church can be in no Hazard from any thing said on that Head.

BUT, if when the dissolute Clergy offend, and those whose Office it is to minister in Holy Things, put forth their Hands to Crime; when Drunkenness, Whoredom, Oaths, and Blasphemy are shamelessly and openly committed by these Sons of Levi, and the Superiors, or such in whose Hands the Government of the Church is plac'd, do not, *Phineas* like, execute Justice for the Lord; if the Discipline of the Church is not exerted, that the scandalous Persons may be remov'd from the Altar, that the Holy Things may not become an Abomination, and the People be made to abhor the Offering of the Lord; if, I say, then I speak plainly, and scorn to spare them, the Crime becomes flagrant, and the Scandal lies on those, in whose Hands the said neglected Discipline is entrusted——The Cause of the Church is betray'd and forsaken, and the Omission, as it is fatal to the Work of the Gospel, so it is scandalous to the Clergy in England——*Let it fall where it will; Who the Coat fits, let him wear it——*

Would the People, who, blinded by Parties, shut their Eyes against their Understandings, and cry out of the Danger of the Church, *but consider this*, Here they would find the real Danger of the Church—Not in Dissenters, not in Schismatics, not in Errors and Heresies, but in Neglect of Discipline, in Breach of Government, in bearing with, and thereby tacitly owning and encouraging abhor'd Debaucheries in the Inferior Clergy—suffering the scandalous Wretches to mingle the Sacred and the Vile, and permitting those to open Heaven Gates to others, who carefully and avowedly shut themselves out.

To tell you this, and to repeat it, that even the Clamour of it may reach you, if the Loathsomness will not, can be no Danger to you; the Crime is the Danger; let the Crime, let the Neglect be rectify'd, and the Author is content He should die that reproaches you with it—To complain now, is just as much dangerous, as he is dangerous to a wounded Man that calls for a Surgeon, or as he is danger to a Town, who discovering a House on Fire, cries Fire, and raises the Neighbours.

To accuse me of being an Enemy to the Church, for rousing up the Sons of Discipline, to purge the House of God from Whoredom; This is a Sign they are in Love with the Crimes of the Clergy, more than with the Safety of the Church.

But let it go; let Dr. *Sacheverell* bring me in attacking the Church, and putting her in Danger, because I may have expos'd the Immoralities of the Clergy, among which he may be conscious of his own Share, and perhaps of my being able to make it out—I shall never leave off exclaiming against the horrible Crimes of the Clergy, till the Right Reverend Governors of the Church shall begin to exercise that Authority GOD and the Church has put into their Hands, to reform or exemplarily punish the Riots, Excesses, and Debaucheries of the Clergy under their Authority, or remove the Persons.

Is the Church in Danger from this? Horrid Slander! Wretched Afront upon the Church! Woe be to that Church, whose Safety lies in a Neglect of Discipline, and a Connivance at Crime! Woe be to that Church, whose Danger lies in Reformation of her Clergy, and whose own Government is a Terror to them!

No, Gentlemen, it is the Safety of the Church of England, and would be her Glory, to have her Discipline revis'd, and these Sons of Scandal remov'd—And no wonder, That a Party of Men, who call themselves the Church, are afraid of this; the Truth is, their own vicious Lives make the Thoughts of it a Terror to them, and they are in the right to say, that complaining of the Crimes of the Clergy puts them all in Danger; for should the Bishops strictly visit their Dioceses

celses faithfully, reprove, admonish, and punish, Woe be to the Race of Men that now prophane the Pulpit in the several Parts of this unhappy Nation !

He was more of a Politician than a Christian, that once reprov'd me for exposing the Vices of the Clergy on another Account, tho' I mention it for the Notice of the Church Clergy—For, says he, *it is the Debauchery of the Clergy that encreases the Number of Dissenters*, and consequently supports their Interest—*Let them go on, says he, the worse the better.* Let Doctor Sacheverell, who is such a profess'd Enemy to the Dissenters, and all his Party, *if their Zeal for the Interest of the Church be what they pretend*, lay up this in their Hearts ; and let me add, if this be true, then He that cries Fire in the Case, and alarms you to a reforming your Clergy, does the greatest Piece of Service to the Church, that it is possible for any Man to be capable of.

I must own, most humbly asking the QUEEN's Pardon for the seeming Boldness of my Expression, I believe her Majesty, notwithstanding all her Royal Speeches in Favour of the Toleration, and Promises of Protection to the Dissenters, to be in the most fatal and most probable Plot against the Dissenters, that ever any of her Royal Predecessors were engag'd in—
I hope I may explain my self.

Queen Elizabeth hated, suppress'd, and even crush'd the Puritans, and kept them under.

King James I. persecuted them, and drove them to seek Banishment to the Wildernesses of America.

King Charles I. carry'd it on, till he push'd them into Arms and Civil War, or if you call it Rebellion, it is not to this Purpose.

King Charles II. fin'd, imprison'd, impoverish'd, harass'd, and intolerably vex'd them.

King James II. caress'd and wheedled them, in order to make Tools of them, wherewith to overthrow the Church of England first, and themselves afterwards, till both should be ingulph'd into one Popery.

But her Majesty has taken the readiest and directest Measures utterly to root their very Name from off the Face of the Earth— Those former Princes let them live, and gave them some lucid Intervals of Favour or Compassion ; but this Design of the QUEEN's will destroy the very Being and Name of a Dissenter in Time, if it should succeed, from off the very Earth— Whether we ought not to pray, that Her Majesty may not succeed in it, let any one judge.

And that you may see, I am not afraid at all to make out the Thing ; I say, this Design is evidently carry'd on by her Majesty Her-Self, *Viz.* In putting into Bishopsricks, recommending to Dignities, and supplying Vacancies, in all such Churches as are in the Royal Gift, with the Men of the most Learning, Piety, Sincerity, and Industry, She can find ; encouraging Ministers thereby to be laborious in their Ministerial Work, conscientious in their Office to the People under their Charge, diligent in their Studies, exemplar in their Lives, capable and sound in their Principles and Doctrine. Woe be to the Dissenters if this Plot goes on ! — The Consequence is plain— Such Men as these will confound the present Ignorance of the Age, banish Scandal and Crime from the Altar, revive Discipline, reform Manners, restore Government first, and at last Worship— And what will become of the very Name of a Dissenter ? — They will be all forgotten in the World— GOD grant, her Majesty's Plot may thus succeed : Then we should be all One Flock again, in One Fold, and under One Shepherd. Amen.

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